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TITLE: Secure Interchangeable Charm Earring System

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DOC NO.: G595A

CROSS REFERENCES AND RELATED SUBJECT MATTER

This application is a continuation of patent application
20 serial number 10/097,229, filed in the United States Patent Office on March 13, 2002.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

25 The invention relates to a secure interchangeable charm earring system. In particular, the invention is an earring that is intended for use with a pieced ear, wherein a charm may be quickly and easily placed on the earring.

Earrings are a popular accessory worn by people of all
30 age groups. Hangings earrings have become popular and allow the wearer a greater design choice. Because of the

configuration of most earrings, however, the wearer is limited to the particular design of the piece of jewelry. The construction of a typical earring does not allow a charm or pendent to be added.

5 Thus, there exists a need for an earring on which a charm may be added and secured. Such an earring should be equipped with a blocked end in order to secure the charm in place on the earring when worn through a pieced ear.

My previous patent, U.S. Patent No. 4,497,186, discloses
10 an earring with a pendent and a circumjacent spiral portion. The earring hangs down from the pierced hole but does not allow for a charm to be added thereto.

While the units available may be suitable for the particular purpose employed, or for general use, they would
15 not be as suitable for the purposes of the present invention as disclosed hereafter.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In view of the foregoing disadvantages inherent in the prior art, the present invention provides an improved secure
5 interchangeable charm earring system. As such, the general purpose of the present invention, which will be described subsequently in greater detail, is to provide a new and improved secure interchangeable charm earring system which has all the advantages of the prior art and none of the
10 disadvantages.

To attain this, the present invention essentially comprises a secure interchangeable charm earring system, for use with pieced ears, includes an earring body from which a charm hangs. Numerous charms, each having a charm opening,
15 but having different ornamental forms can be interchanged on the earring. The earring has a free end, a blocked end, and a length of material extending therebetween. The earring also has an apex portion, a spiraling middle portion extending between the apex portion and the free end, and a vertical piece extending between the apex portion and the
20 blocked end. When the charm is brought into contact with the blocked end, the charm is not permitted to pass over the blocked end. When the earring is positioned in place within the pieced ear hole, the earring hangs down from the pieced
25 ear, with the apex portion extending through the hole. The charm is then maintained securely on the earring between the blocked end and the pieced ear.

It is an object of the invention to produce an earring on which a charm may be worn. Accordingly, the earring has a free end and a blocked end. The free end is threaded through the pieced hole, and charm is trapped between the pieced ear
5 and the blocked end.

It is a further object of the invention to produce an earring on which a charm can be quickly and easily interchangeable on the earring, and is secured therein without the need for additional hardware. Accordingly, the
10 charm has a charm opening such as that provided by a charm ring, and the body of the earring is threaded through the charm opening.

To the accomplishment of the above and related objects the invention may be embodied in the form illustrated in the
15 accompanying drawings. Attention is called to the fact, however, that the drawings are illustrative only. Variations are contemplated as being part of the invention, limited only by the scope of the claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings, like elements are depicted by like reference numerals. The drawings are briefly described as
5 follows.

FIG 1 is a perspective view of three embodiments of the secure interchangeable charm earring system.

10 FIG 1A is a cross sectional view, taken along line 1A-1A of FIG 1.

FIG 1B is a cross sectional view, taken along line 1B-1B of FIG 1.

15 FIG 2 is a front elevational view of the earring, with the body of the earring being threaded through the charm ring.

20 FIG 3 is a front elevational view of the free end of the earring being fed through the pierced ear.

FIG 4 is a front elevational view of the spiraling middle portion of the earring being fed through the pierced
25 ear.

FIG 5 is a front elevational view of the middle portion of the earring fed further through the pierced ear wherein the earring has been twisted to follow the spiral of the middle portion.

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FIG 6 is front elevational view of the earring in place within the pieced ear, where the apex is located near the pierced hole.

REFERENCE NUMERALS

- 10 earring
11 earring body
5 12 charm
121 charm opening
12R charm ring
14 free end
16 blocked end
10 18 apex portion
20 curved bottom portion
20V curved bottom portion valley
20H curved bottom portion high point
22 spiraling middle portion
15 24 vertical piece
26 ball
28 concentric circles
30 pierced ear
32 pieced hole

20

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG 1 illustrates three embodiments of the invention, showing an earring 10 having a charm 12 hanging therefrom.

5 According to the present invention, numerous charms 12, having different ornamental forms, can be interchanged on the earring 10. The earring 10 is for use with a pieced ear 30 having a pierced hole 32. The earring 10 comprises an earring body 11 formed from a single integral piece, said 10 piece having a substantially uniform cross section through its length, and is typically wire-like.

The charm 12 may take any form and is placed on the earring 10 before said earring 10 is placed in the ear 30.

15 The charm 12 has a charm opening 121 which may comprise a bore extending through the charm 12, such as the bead illustrated in the embodiment of FIG 1B. The charm opening 121 may also be provided by a charm ring 12R which is itself secured to the charm. In any case, the charm 12 is secured on the earring 10 by the charm opening 121 that extends 20 around the body 11 of the earring 10. Put another way, the body 11 of the earring 10 is sized to extend through the charm opening 121. The earring 10 may be constructed from a wide variety of materials, namely gold, silver, metal, or plastic.

25 The earring 10 substantially comprises a free end 14, a blocked end 16, and a length of material extending therebetween. The length of material is designed in such a

manner as to allow a person to insert the free end 14 into and thread the pierced ear 30, as illustrated in FIGS 3, 4 and 5. The earring 10 further has an apex portion 18, a curved bottom portion 20, and a vertical piece 24 that 5 extends between the apex portion 18 and the bottom portion 20. A spiraling middle portion 22 extends immediately from the free end 14 and wraps around the vertical piece 24. The curved bottom portion 20 has a valley 20V and a high point 20H.

10 The free end 14 is located at the end of the middle portion 22 and the blocked end 16 may be positioned below the free end 14, at the curved bottom portion high point 20H. The free end 14 extends into the angled middle portion 22, said middle portion reaching up to the apex portion 18. The 15 vertical piece 24 connects the apex portion 18 and the bottom portion 20. When in place on the earring 10, the charm 12 dangles from the valley 20V of the bottom portion 20.

 The blocked end 16 of the earring 10 may take on a variety of embodiments in order to prevent the charm 12 from 20 extending past the blocked end 16, as illustrated in FIG 1. By one such embodiment a ball 26 is attached at the blocked end 16, said ball having a larger diameter than the charm opening 121, which prevents the charm 12 from extending past the blocked end 16. When the charm ring 12R or charm opening 25 121 is brought into contact with the blocked end 16, the ring 12R or opening 121 is not permitted to pass over the blocked end 16. Alternatively, the blocked end 16 may be formed into

concentric circles 28, with insufficient space between the circles 28 to allow the charm opening 121 to pass. This configuration has the same result as the ball 26, namely preventing the charm ring 12R from escaping off of the
5 earring 10 via the blocked end 16, yet allows the earring to be constructed from a single piece of material.

In use, the charm 12 is first placed on the earring 10 by passing the earring free end 14 through the charm opening 121 (which may involve passing the free end 14 through the
10 charm ring 12R), as illustrated in FIG 2. The earring 10 is then threaded through the charm opening 121 by moving the charm 12 along the earring body 11 fully to the blocked end 16. The charm 12 extends over the middle portion 22, up and over the apex portion 18, and down along the vertical piece
15 24 towards the bottom portion valley 20V. Once the charm 12 is in place and resting in the valley 20V or otherwise near the blocked end 16, the earring 10 is progressively fed through the pieced hole 32, as illustrated in FIGS 3, 4 and 5. The spiraling middle portion 24 is fed through the hole
20 32 while twisting the earring until the apex portion 18 reaches said hole 32. The earring 10 hangs down from the pieced ear 30, with the apex portion 18 extending through the hole. The charm 12 is then maintained securely on the earring 10 between the blocked end 16 and the ear 30, without
25 the need for additional hardware.

Referring to FIG 6, the earring 10 having the charm 12 on the body 11 is fully installed on the ear 30.

Accordingly, because of the structure of the present invention, the charm 12 may be quickly and easily threaded onto the earring 10. However, once the earring 10 is mounted on the ear 30, the charm 12 cannot be removed from the earring 10. Because the charm cannot be removed in either direction, the charm 12 is prevented from becoming lost, since it is trapped between the ear 30 and the blocked end 16.

In conclusion, herein is presented a system for allowing a charm to be easily interchanged on an earring and maintaining a charm on the earring in a secure manner while the earring is on the ear, without the need for additional hardware. The invention is illustrated by example in the drawing figures, and throughout the written description. It should be understood that numerous variations are possible, while adhering to the inventive concept. Such variations are contemplated as being a part of the present invention.